DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 992 CE 071 287

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TITLE Border Pedagogy: A Critical Framework for Service Learning.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Adult Literacy; *Cross Cultural Training; Cultural Awareness; *Literacy Education; Multicultural Education; *Service Learning; Tutoring; *Tutors
IDENTIFIERS *Critical Pedagogy

ABSTRACT

The general focus of a course on adult literacy and community service at a large state university was to increase students' understanding of adult literacy as a societal issue and to support their involvement as tutors in local adult literacy programs. To understand what students learned from their experience in the course, the instructors began collecting and analyzing various source material. They also began developing case studies of individual tutors and their learning experiences. As the instructors analyzed the accounts of the tutors, they became interested in how the service learning experience provided opportunities for the tutors to adopt a more critical perspective on common assumptions about adult literacy students, dominant tutoring practices, and the structures of schooling. They reviewed tutors' case profiles and original source material to see if they could identify forms of resistance to dominant practices or beliefs. In more recent work associated with critical postmodernism and educational theory, they found the concepts of border and border crossing. They found that the metaphors of border crossing and borderlands could illuminate the service learning experience for students. These metaphors suggested how service learning helps students with the following: understanding their own culture in new ways, appreciating cultural differences, becoming more critically aware of social inequities and power relations, and envisioning a more democratic society. (Contains 12 references.) (YLB)

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ED 393 992

BORDER PEDAGOGY: A CRITICAL FRAMEWORK FOR SERVICE LEARNING

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Paper presented at
the American Educational Research Association Conference
New York City, New York
April 1996

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Introduction

At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through both serpent and eagle eyes. (Anzaldua, 1990 p. 378)

This is a story of coming to see service learning from a new perspective. In this story, we describe how our students' narratives led us to this new perspective. We suggest how the metaphors of border crossing and borderlands, as reflective of a critical postmodern perspective, can illuminate the service learning experience for students. These metaphors suggest how service learning prompts students to understand their own culture in new ways, appreciate cultural differences, become more critically aware of social inequities and power relations, and envision a more democratic society. We will offer some of our preliminary ideas about the implications of border pedagogy (Giroux, 1992) for service learning.

Our discussion is based on our experiences of teaching and researching a course including community service at a large state university. The general focus of the course, Adult Literacy and Community Service, is to increase students' understanding of adult literacy as a societal issue, and to support their involvement as tutors in local adult literacy programs. The course gives students the opportunity to interact with other adult students whose socioeconomic, racial, and cultural backgrounds are very different from their own. The course was developed, along with many others at institutions across the nation, with funds from the federal Student Literacy Corps program, as a means to promote the involvement of college students in community service. Students complete 60 hours of tutoring during the semester. They also participate in a weekly class that emphasizes group discussion of issues and insights arising from the tutoring experience.

In an effort to understand what students learn from their experience in the course, we have been collecting and analyzing various source material. This source material includes written tutor expectations collected at the start of each semester, tutor journals, final reflection papers, and transcripts of exit interviews conducted with each student. An additional source of information has been notes from class and small group discussions. We selected a small sample of tutors who represented diverse characteristics and academic backgrounds for our

initial study. Broad categories of potential learning outcomes were generated from an initial analysis of tutor journals. The categories included perceptions of adult literacy learners, the nature of literacy, outcomes of literacy education, tutoring activities, self as a tutor and learner, nature of literacy programs, and roles of literacy teachers. With the help of another research assistant, we have been developing case profiles of individual tutors and their learning experiences.

Three Student's Perspectives on the Service Learning Experience

I have learned that there are zillions of other things going on in the lives of my students as well as myself. Also, just because they are poor does not mean that they sit around all day staring at the walls. They have got just as much class, are just as ambitious, and have just as many dreams as we do. (Susan, literacy tutor)

I often felt ambivalent about my role at [the adult education program]: helper? support staff? volunteer? tutor? I did not have a sense of direction which often led to frustration. (Elena, literacy tutor)

I think learning should always be fun and new to the tutor, teacher and learner. That way no one ever gets bored with the routine of learning, which I think is one or among one of the main reasons people leave school. (Dwight, literacy tutor)

Students' Stories. The richness and diversity of the tutors' service learning experiences has been striking. Brief descriptions of three students illustrate issues that began to emerge for them, and us as teachers, as significant. All quotes are taken from the tutors' journals or transcripts of their exit interviews. Our first example, Susan (tutor names are pseudonyms), a white 20 year old undergraduate, tutored adults in a community center adjacent to a housing development. Through her exposure to the conditions of these adults' daily lives, Susan became more aware of the obstacles to learning that they faced: *"I guess I didn't realize that they would have other problems compounding them [literacy deficiencies]. Like learning disabilities and having five kids under the age of seven, stuff like that."* However, she became frustrated by the irregular attendance patterns of the adult students, particularly since the tutoring was offered in close proximity to their homes and seemingly readily accessible. Susan recognized, in theory, the negative influence of social inequities on learners' educational success: *"they are people who are trapped in the web of gender, economic, and racially-biased processes that affect American society." "It makes you realize how hard it is to get out of that community. You probably are so used to being discriminated against so it was real hard to break that inferiority complex."* Still, she continued to assert that individual students' negative attitudes and lack of motivation were the major barriers to their present

educational progress: *"Beautiful spring day. No one showed up. Just goes to show that people will always find an excuse and that the real problem lies in establishing sound priorities and maintaining clear sight of a focused goal."* She later suggests: *"It seems that there are an abundance of social service programs (learnfare, Healthy Start) targeted at people like L. who simply lack the motivation (for whatever reason) to utilize them. So rather than funding more programs, maybe we (the public) need to concentrate on motivation enhancement techniques."* One thing we learned from Susan was how tutors, in their concrete encounters with adult literacy students, often struggle to reconcile social issues with their own personal beliefs, values and experiences. Susan developed new understandings of poverty and racism, but she relied on other, contradictory beliefs in order to make sense out of her experience.

Elena, a 35 year old Hispanic graduate student, illustrates how conflicts in the tutor role itself could be a source of critique and learning. For part of the semester, Elena struggled with feelings of inadequacy as a tutor and questions about her role. Gradually, she was able to relate these feelings to the feelings of her students: *"My ideas about being a tutor/helper/volunteer are changing. . . I feel there are periods of insecurity (on my part) and periods of competence; periods when I feel like I'm really helping someone and periods when I question my ability to make the necessary connection. Then I wonder how the learner must feel; how he probably feels the same way I do, with high points and low points. To keep this focus in mind is important: to see the process as interactive, with both of us learning and growing as we go along."* Despite her insecurities, she felt that her abilities were not respected and utilized by the teaching staff: *"We the volunteers are disposible. Yes we are needed, but we are also used, in the negative sense of the word. I feel we are being used because we are not taken seriously.. . . Do only they have the edge on teaching? . . . at least they should <u>try</u> to treat us as <u>peers</u>."* She concluded that *"It was not enough for me to feel good about being involved in community service. I wanted to be a partner with the lead teachers. . . I wanted to involved in curriculum decisions. . . I wanted more authority and independence."* From Elena, we began to learn how the tutor role can position students to empathize in new ways with adult literacy learners and to question the institutional arrangements that reinforce relationships of power and authority in the classroom.

Dwight, a 21 year old African-American undergraduate, gave us more insight into how tutors might position themselves in relation to their students and how this relationship affected their tutoring practices. Dwight, like many other tutors, felt it was important to develop an egalitarian relationship with the adult students, resisting the traditional teacher role: *"I didn't want to come across as a teacher, asking 'what's this' or 'what's that,' so we took breaks between the lessons and just talked, because sometimes I think they [the students] like to*

work but they also like to talk about whatever." While Dwight gave advice during these talks, he described the discussions as involving mutual give and take: "*But she wants to talk about it, so I just sit back and listen. At the end of her talking, I give my opinions and commentary about what is going on, and she tells me if she agrees or disagrees. Then she feels better and I feel better.*" Dwight adopted a role of learning partner with the adult students. He had difficulty with teaching math, but rather than avoiding the subject, he learns along with the students: "*It [math] is a challenge for both of us. Because I'm not good in math, we both have to sit down and do the work on paper so that we both don't come up with the wrong numbers. We check each other's work. The interaction we have in the process of working out these problems helps us to communicate.*" With another student, he shared job-hunting: "*I found out he was looking for a job, and since I was also, I pulled out the want ads and we both looked for a job.*" Dwight, unlike most of the other tutors, had been a student in an inner city school and his memories of that experience seemed to affect his stance toward his students and his tutoring practices: "*Every time I go back to my old high school, I see why people in inner cities have hard times reading and writing. Because they are trapped in a system that does not care about them.*" In contrast, Dwight emphasized caring: "*The first thing I try to do is to show the person I'm working with that I'm committed to him or her, and to their goal, whatever that may be.*" He drew on his own experiences in questioning tutoring practices: "*I noticed that some of the tutors left their students to do whatever. Remembering when I got tutored during high school, I hated for my teacher to leave. I knew the work but just wanted them to be there for my support. Looking at some of the students at [the adult program], they had the same look but no one said anything.*" Dwight showed us how tutors can begin to challenge the hierarchy of power relationships in the classroom and begin to construct new relationships with learners. He also showed us how tutors might use their own schooling experiences as the basis for questioning and redesigning instructional practices.

Trying On Different Theories to fit Students' Experiences. As we analyzed the accounts of these and other tutors, we became especially interested in how the service learning experience provided opportunities for the tutors to adopt a more critical perspective on common assumptions about adult literacy students, dominant tutoring practices, and the structures of schooling. Although the student profiles varied considerably, we thought it might be possible to devise some broad generalizations about their perspectives. We were intrigued with the concept of "resistance" common in the literature associated with critical educational theory, and thought this might be useful as a means of characterizing the students' critical beliefs and actions. We decided to review the tutors' case profiles and original source material to see if we could identify forms of resistance to dominant practices or beliefs.

Using a resistance model proved to be disappointing. We felt we were imposing an interpretation on tutor's actions and beliefs that might not be appropriate. We found it difficult to define and label "resistance." For example, Susan would sometimes articulate a critical perspective but then describe interactions with learners that were inconsistent with this perspective. In other cases, tutors would engage in behavior that appeared to be "resistance" but they did not offer evidence of a critical understanding of their actions. In a few instances, tutors "resisted" a critical perspective rather than the reverse. We needed a better way to conceptualize the complexity of the tutors' experiences in order to understand how service learning might support both critical awareness and action.

We then went back to the literature to see if it would help us deal with these concerns. In doing so, we began to review some of the more recent work associated with critical postmodernism and educational theory. This was not a body of literature that might initially appear to be of great utiliity in making sense of students' service learning experiences. Much of the writing in this area remains at an abstract, and theoretical level, this made it difficult to apply to concrete learning situations. But when we encountered the concepts of border and border crossing (Anzaldua, 1987, 1990 ; Giroux, 1992; Kanpol & McLaren, 1995), we discovered a compelling starting point for describing and re-thinking the nature of service learning.

Border Crossing and Borderlands

The category of border . . . speaks to the need to create pedagogical conditions in which students become border crossers in order to understand otherness in its own terms, and to further create borderlands in which diverse cultural resources allow for the fashioning of new identities within existing configurations of power (Giroux, 1992, p. 28)

Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line. A narrow strip, along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and the forbidden are its inhabitants... (Anzaldua,1987, p. 3)

Perhaps the most compelling descriptions of border crossing and borderlands can be found in the work of Gloria Anzaldua (1987, 1990). Anzaldua uses the image of crossing borders to describe the Mexican-American woman's (*mestiza*) experience of moving across cultural boundaries, being born of two cultures. In her description, the *mestiza* lives in a borderland, a state of

"perpetual transition," in which different cultural beliefs and values typically conflict, leading to confusion, a "mental and emotional state of perplexity" (1990, p. 377). While this confusion can be painful, it provides the opportunity for the development of a new consciousness. The development of this new consciousness demands the reshaping of mental borders and a new process of thought: " from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move towards a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by movement away from set patterns and goals and toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes . . . The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity." (Anzaldua, 1990, p. 378-379). Anzaldua suggests that transcending dualistic thinking is central to creating a society that brings people of diverse cultures together and bridges different voices and identities. For us, this intense metaphor suggested the complex, changing, and often contradictory nature of students' viewpoints and the shifting foundations on which these viewpoints stand.

Critical postmodernists in education have adopted the border crossing metaphor to characterize learning experiences that are central to the development of a "radical democracy" (Giroux, 1992, p.248). A key tenet of postmodernism is that all people, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, are "in constant creation and negotiation within structures of ideology and material constraints" (Weiler, 1988, p. 467). These structures presently support systems of unequal power and domination by privileging certain forms of knowledge and experience over others. Critical postmodernists highlight how power relationships permeate everyday life and are represented in language, the "texts" of popular culture such as the media, as well as in the organization and practices of institutions such as schools. Important in the postmodern perspective, however, is the belief in individual agency and people's potential to resist domination, however pervasive it might seem to be. Border crossing serves as a metaphor for how people might gain a more critical perspective on the forms of domination inherent in their own histories, knowledge, and practices, and learn to value alternative forms of knowledge. Crossing borders of knowledge, and entering into "borderlands," where existing patterns of thought, relationship, and identity are called into question and juxtaposed with alternative ways of knowing and being, provides the opportunity for creative and oppositional reconstructions of self, knowledge, and culture: "borderlands should be seen as sites both for critical analysis and as a potential source of experimentation, creativity, and possibility" (Giroux, 1992, p. 34).

While we found these ideas to be provocative, we found concrete descriptions of border crossing in the literature to be limited. However, as we looked at our students' experiences from this perspective, we felt that service

learning offered a wealth of opportunities and examples of border crossing. One of the more obvious examples is crossing physical borders, as the university tutors left campus and enter places in the community and community agencies that they ordinarily would never enter. Physical borders were redefined as the community became their classroom for learning about adult literacy. Crossing these physical borders, as Susan's example suggests, exposed tutors to the effects of poverty and racism on individual lives, suggesting the need for more complex ways of understanding the potential for individual agency. Such border crossing also highlighted the social boundaries that kept their lives separate from low-literate adults in the community, even though they often were close in proximity to campus. As Dwight's story illustrates, the tutors crossed and redefined social borders in their relationships with the adult literacy students, as they variously established relationships involving friendship and mutuality rather than assumed a detached "professional" role. Borders of identity were also crossed, as the university students adopted the role of tutor while simultaneously remaining a learner in the tutoring situation. Tutors such as Elena struggled with institutional borders, questioning the marginal, subordinate role of volunteer tutors in relationship to paid instructional staff. In their tutoring with immigrant students, the tutors encountered cultural borders, giving them opportunities for new perspectives on their own cultural values and practices

We believe that metaphors can be powerful means for representing and reframing educational theory and practice. The border metaphor invites us to identify and map the multidimensional boundaries that simultaneously enables and constrains students' service learning experiences. The metaphor of borderlands draws our attention to the potential ambiguity and complexity of these experiences. But rather than seeing this as problematic, suggesting the need to give students more structure or direction, teaching them instrumental skills or problem-solving strategies, a critical postmodern perspective helps us to appreciate and value ambiguity and uncertainty as opportunities for different types of learning from service. From this perspective, knowledge is always partial, continually being created and recreated in response to new ideas and experience. In contrast to more linear, structural models of learning that typically form the basis for service learning work, critical postmodernism offers a nonlinear conception of learning, points to the intertwining of identity, thought, and culture in learning, and suggests that new modes of thought are critical outcomes of learning intended to support a democratic society. It encourages us to view service learning experiences as sites of potential resistance to social inequities as well as sites of creative change and possibility. It allows us to see our students as active agents in constructing new kinds of knowledge and relationships through their service learning experiences, that go beyond what we or they may have anticipated. Finally, this perspective draws our attention to the significance of empathy, mutuality, and finding "similarities across differences"

among people as a key element of service learning intended to support a cultural democracy. In contrast to simply developing students' abilities and motivation to engage in "helping" relationships, a border pedagogy asks that we problematize such relationships and use them as opportunities for challenging and transforming inequities of power and authority.

A Border Pedagogy for Service Learning

. . . border pedagogy points to the need for educators to rethink the syntax of learning and behavior outside the geography of rationality and reason. . . . it points to a pedagogical practice that takes seriously how ideologies are lived, experienced, and felt at the level of everyday life as the basis for student experience and knowledge (Giroux, 1992, p. 176)

I have been thinking about the value judgements we always make and Western culture bias and how this permeates all of our thinking without even being aware of it . . . if the dominant culture wants to make the less dominant 'illiterate' culture perform to standards . . . is this a judgement call? The challenge is to validate and recognize new/different/valuable in-culture (but not better) values. . . (Elena, literacy tutor)

As instructors of a course including service learning, we are concerned with how border metaphors and critical postmodernism can help us reframe not only our understanding of service learning experiences, but also our educational practice. What might be a border pedagogy for service learning? From the writing of critical educators such as Giroux (1992), Freire (1987), Shor (1992) , and feminist educators such as hooks (1994), Lather (1991) and Weiler (1988, 1991), we have drawn some general ideas as a starting point. First, a border pedagogy can help us rethink and clarify our goals for service learning. Giroux (1992) suggests that border pedagogy is a means of "developing a democratic public philosophy that respects the notion of difference as a part of the common struggle to extend the quality of public life" (p. 28) This implies that educators have a responsibility to forge community bonds and develop critical communities of people within and outside of educational institutions. Creating critical communities requires that people transform power relationships among dominant and subordinate groups, and that they create alternative forms of culture that embrace rather than deny people's diverse identities and histories. In a border pedagogy, educators assume more agency and power in supporting social change efforts through their curricula and oppositional teaching practices.

How might a border pedagogy support such goals? A key element is helping students become more aware and critical of how inequitable power

relationships and forms of domination are reflected and reproduced in various "texts," including the forms of knowledge represented in school curricula, dominant literary and historical canons, and forms of popular culture such as the mass media. Dominant forms of knowledge are "decentered" and opened to critique by including and valuing multiple forms of knowledge. The students' own voices and experiences become central to a process of creating new forms of knowledge (rather than supplemental to learning formal "theory" in course content). However, it is essential that students - and teachers - become critical of their own beliefs and knowledge: "theory and practice must be linked to an analysis of people's experience and the unproblematic claims and world vioews that they hold. The task presented is one of problematizing those claims thereby revealing the contradictions in our everyday life and the words we use to describe or defend it" (Pietrykowski, 1996, p. 93). Emphasis is placed on providing conditions for students to question and learn about different cultural perspectives, as well as identify similarities across these differences that can serve as common bonds among people. The idea however, is not to "force" these issues making them "intrusive, invasive, pressured" or "shoulds" (Lather, 1991, p.143), so much as to provide space and guidance for students so that they can examine them. A question for educators becomes, "How can we position ourselves as less masters of truth and justice and more as creators of space where those directly involved can act and speak on another's behalf? How do we do so without romanticizing experience-based knowledge?" (Lather, p.137).

Affective learning is also important for enabling students to foster these common bonds. Kathleen Weiler (1991), drawing on Audre Lorde, discusses the importance of feelings as a a source of oppositional knowledge. bell hooks calls attention to the need for passion (eros) in the classroom, so that: "The classroom becomes a dynamic place where transformation in social relations are concretely actualized and the false dichotomy between the world outside and the inside world of the academy disappears" (1994, p. 143). An egalitarian, cooperative and engaged classroom climate is essential for promoting dialogue and sharing of students' experiences and perspectives. A supportive environment is also necessary as students critically assess the ideologies inherent in these experiences and perspectives. Ideally, the educator "decenters" her own power and authority by modelling critical awareness and analysis of her own knowledge and experiences. She also provides a model of support, empathy and enthusiasm for learning.

How does service learning fit within this general framework for a border pedagogy? We suggest that service learning provides an additional "text" of experience that students can bring back to the university classroom for interpretation and critique. In using service learning as a text, we must first

encourage students to give voice to their experience, through methods such as journals and class discussions. They must also have the opportunity to listen and learn from the experiences of other students. Critical reflection on their own and others' stories should go beyond a focus on events or people to how students are making meaning of their experience. How are problems framed and what assumptions do they reflect? How are dominant ideologies or power relationships reflected in the service learning setting - and in their own actions and beliefs? When students can hold multiple rather than singular reading "positions" (Lather, 1991, p.145) in relation to their service experiences, they are then able to "read their worlds" (Freire, 1987) in new and rich ways. As students develop and share alternative interpretations of their experience, group discussion can be used not simply for problem-solving, but for problem-posing and re-framing. Students can use their service learning experiences as "counter-texts" (Pietrykowski, 1996, p. 93) to compare with and raise questions about dominant knowledge found in published texts, as well as in popular culture.

We have only begun to develop these ideas in our own instructional practice, but we can offer some examples to illustrate some potential applications:

Analyzing Dominant Texts and Popular Culture. We have encouraged tutors to critically examine the textbooks that are used in adult literacy programs, such as the high school equivalency exam workbooks or "life skills" curricula. Together, we raise questions about the cultural knowledge embodied in such texts and their relevance to the lives of low-literate adults.We have encouraged students to be more critical of representations of low-literate adults in popular culture by analyzing advertisements intended to increase awareness about adult illiteracy in the United States. Reading the "subtexts" of these ads reveal negative and deficit images of adult literacy learners and offers opportunities for questioning the stigma associated with low literacy and understanding how it is perpetuated. At the same time, students are encouraged to argue with the authors of their class readings, even authors who use "liberatory" rhetoric. The students test the authors' theories with their own experiences as tutors.

Conducting Interviews with Students. Tutors are asked to interview an adult whom they have tutored in the adult literacy program. The narratives the tutors hear from the students are sometimes very different from textbook stories of low-literates. This dialoguing offers opportunities for the tutor and student to form closer bonds and develop rapport,as well as to note differences between each other's histories. Most importantly, it allows the tutors to really get to know their students in a respectful way. They can then understand a little more why students miss class, their problems with learning, and resistance towards certain

assignments.

Questioning the System. In their journals and class discussions, the tutors frequently use their experiences to raise questions about the educational system. As Elena did, they may become critical of power relationships in the classroom, or as Dwight did, they may question certain teaching practices. They speculate on the value - or lack of value - of literacy in changing people's lives. As the semester progresses, we provide the tutors with readings that present alternative perspectives on the purpose of literacy education and its impact on the lives of low-literate adults. These readings help the tutors put their own experience into a broader societal and theoretical context, and help them challenge their own assumptions and values as well as the values and philosophies of adult literacy programs. We also offer examples of alternative literacy educational approaches, and encourage the tutors to examine them from different perspectives. For example, we have developed a hypothetical proposal for a participatory literacy educational program, assigned groups of tutors to the roles of teacher, student, and funding provider, and asked them to argue for or against the proposal. Such activities help the tutors understand different, often conflicting perspectives and highlight the complexity of educational change efforts.

As our ideas about border pedagogy develop, we have envisioned other priorities for our curriculum. While students have considerable opportunities to share their service learning experiences and reflect on their learning, we hope to engage them in more consistent efforts to become more critical of their own assumptions and the ideologies inherent in their beliefs. Such critical awareness can be stimulated by other students as well as by us as educators. In our most recent course, one tutor voiced a concern to the group about how adult literacy learners were being discussed in class - in anecdotes that she believed threatened to be condescending. This provides an excellent example of how students might prompt each other to become more sensitive to the effects of domination on their own thoughts and actions.

We also have become more sensitive to the danger of imposing or reinforcing, however subtly, a one-sided perspective. As Anzaldua exclaims, " It is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank shouting questions, challenging patriarchal white conventions." (1990, p.378). Pietrykowski (1996) points out the dangers inherent in a stance that "privileges a particular emancipatory logic and does not tolerate differences in the social construction of diverse communities of knowledge and educational practice" (p. 90). Lather discusses the need for practicing "reflexive" storytelling and readings that are not closed-ended, disengaged and restricted, but "embodied, desiring, invested in a variety of often contradictory privileges and struggles." (Lather, 1991, p.

129). We have realized that it is important to engage students in a more critical analysis of even those texts that seem to represent positive challenges to the status quo. For example, we might engage students in questioning texts that challenge stereotypes of stupid or culturally deficient illiterate adults by celebrating certain strengths of these adults like their collaborative strengths and practical intelligence. We can question how such an oppositional stance easily removes individual complexities or alternately reinforces or re-centers systems of power and inequity. We can ask whether such viewpoints are complex enough to incorporate peoples' own diverse beliefs about themselves and their cultures or whether such analyses simplify their perspectives for the sake of cohesiveness. It is critical that readings and interpretations incorporate contradictions, to promote the kind of divergent thinking that, as Anzaldua (1990) points out, is critical to bridging differences among people and cultures.

Conclusion

I stand at the river, watching the curving, twisting serpent, a serpent nailed to the fence where the mouth of the Rio Grande empties into the Gulf. I have come back... (Anzaldua, 1990, p. 387)

Here *la mestiza* stands, at the brink of intense uncertainty, watching the intertwining river and the land that inscribes it. As both an insider and an outsider, she sees the river's different sides and its complicated form. Although none of the students made the kinds of sacrifices Anzaldua (1987) describes, of crossing legal, cultural and economic borders in fear and for survival, her metaphor along with Giroux's, proved to be fruitful for illuminating issues of difference and power and for a new way of seeing teaching and learning in terms of their powerful indeterminacy. When students as well as teachers cross over into places they do not usually go, the "forbidden terrains," as Giroux (1992) suggests, are "remapped" (p.174). Sets of relationships, like borders, can become redefined and students become bridges, building solidarity across these borders. Service learning offers university students a unique opportunity to challenge their social identities, to think in more critical and complex ways and to engage in a passionate form of teaching and learning. In many different ways, our students stepped into the river and felt its power.

Through the eyes and hearts of these students, we saw how difficult it often was for them to cross over into a new territory---to protest lines of authority, to try curricula that was new and different and to redraw the lines of teaching to include friendship. The emotional limits of the students were often tested too, especially at the end of the semester, when they said goodbye to the students they tutored. Elena expressed feelings of uncertainty about this process, "*It was difficult for me to talk about it with [my student]. I did, however, and it was good.*

He said, 'Does this mean I will never see you again?' Which was a difficult issue for me, because I don't know if I will. It will be nice for me to think I will, but I don't know how realistic that is. We exchanged numbers and I told him we'd get together sometime to study..." Some of the students continued to nurture these relationships while others chose to stop. These students were indeed "border crossers." They were challenged to cross boundaries in new, in different and in critical ways. Some of them were aware of these borders and others came to an awareness of them over time. Sometimes they crossed with eyes closed and sometimes with eyes opened. They learned that they could make borders visible, respond to them and reshape them in different forms. They did this sometimes openly, sometimes covertly and subversively, and frequently, in contradictory ways.

Although stories and semesters end, journeys continue. Sometimes we need to cross more borders to discover who we are and what we believe. As it turned out, Susan joined the Peace Corps. No doubt, she literally will be challenged to cross many invisible and not so invisible borders of class, knowledge, culture and history. Other students continued to volunteer at the agencies and a few found paid positions as teachers. Then again, some of us, students and faculty, return home, to the university, another semester, another class. Coming home, as Anzaldua suggests, is another opportunity to raise consciousness about the roles these borders have played in our past, how we live them day to day, and our power to change them in the future. Indeed, we cross many borders ourselves in our work with service learning. Crossing, as we have seen, is not easy, because borders, like the markings of a river, change again and again. But border crossing is a challenge - and a perspective - that we find inspiring and illuminating, as we continue to explore the meanings and boundaries of service learning.

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